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CONTENTS

ROBERT C. WEEMS, JR.

- A Revolt Against King Cotton in 1829* 1

IDA HARLENE MOHR

- TVA in Tishomingo* 14

JAMES E. SAVAGE

- The Marriage Problem in the "Canterbury Tales"* 27

JOHN K. BETTERSORTH

- Mississippi People at Midcentury* 30

PETTON W. WILLIAMS, JR.

- The Marriage of Myth and Reason* 34

NEWS AND NOTES

41

CONTRIBUTORS

42

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Editor

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A CHALLENGE TO KING COTTON IN 1829

By ROBERT C. WEEMS, JR.

Editorial Foreword

Conventional notions concerning ante-bellum Southern attitudes on cotton, slavery, and the protective tariff are often misleading, particularly if one bases his understanding of the Old South on the several decades preceding the Civil War, and nothing more. Actually, the forty years following the invention of the cotton gin found the South frequently in a state of economic agnosticism. Not everyone was wedded to cotton; there were no few, even among the planter class, who scrupled slavery, as much for economic reasons as moral; and there were those who felt that the economy of the South should be diversified rather than unreservedly agricultural. It must be remembered that many Southerners, planters included, had Whiggish leanings in politics, and as such could appreciate the Hamiltonian respect for trade, industry, and finance that the Whigs had inherited from Federalism. Naturally, then, it is not surprising that sour notes often burst in upon the pastoral symphony of the cotton economy. No few Southerners were men who had in their own lifetimes come into the wilderness to make for themselves a new way of life without preconceived notions about the sacredness of the cotton economy — or any other economy, for that matter.

Mississippi in the 1820's was still somewhat of an economic frontier. Cotton was king, but the industrial revolution that had made cotton king could readily be swallowed up in counterrevolution, were some better way of economic entreprenuring to be found for the South. Mississippians could have easily been persuaded in this economically inchoate era that they had best send the cotton seed back to Mexico, the Negroes back to Africa, and Sir Walter Scott's chivalric novels back to England. In the turbulent twenties the state suffered economic depression, particularly in the years 1826-1827. Credit was short, thanks in part to the ultraconservative policies of the Bank of Mississippi. It was the state's one and only bank, and a monopoly at that, which hesitated to extend its facilities beyond the confines of the river counties. How could Mississippi, in the process of expanding into lands now being taken from the Indians and opened for white settlement, be content with the status quo? It was in such a situation that Mississippians began to consider the

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virtues of industrial development, even if it meant protective tariffs. In 1828 a fantastically high tariff measure had been dubbed a "Tariff of Abominations" by angry cotton planters. Was the tariff necessarily an abomination? Or was cotton? At least some Mississippians were willing to investigate the matter.

This article is based on a chapter in the doctoral dissertation of Robert C. Weems, Jr., Dean of the School of Business and Industry at Mississippi State College. The dissertation was a study of the Bank of Mississippi against the background of the general economic development of the state from 1800 to 1830. This chapter is published here not only because its revelations concerning the economic doubts of Mississippi in the 1820's are somewhat startling, but also because it suggests significant parallels with Mississippi's problems of the present century, including the B. A. W. I. program. — J. K. B.

The "Bank" and Economic Unrest

In the early months of 1829 the Bank of the State of Mississippi was still in complete control of the banking function. It had not conceded any of the monopolistic privileges which the legislature had granted it in 1818 and it was standing firmly upon its legal right to maintain until December 31, 1840 a full monopoly of the banking business conducted within the state.

The official state bank had enjoyed a long and prosperous career. From the time of the founding of the original parent institution in 1809, it had served as the sole bank in the territory and state. It had successfully survived a war, a major financial crisis, a depression, two legislative investigations, and three direct attempts of public officials to weaken its position. These latter efforts included plans to collect from it a large annual cash bonus, to establish a new state bank, and to invite a branch of the Bank of the United States to be located in Mississippi. The bank had always made good profits and paid handsome dividends. It had defaulted in its obligations only once — during and immediately following the war of 1812 — and that, according to the bank, for patriotic reasons rather than necessity. This superior performance record had brought it a great deal of credit from Mississippians who respected sound banking, particularly those who were familiar with the disastrous banking experiences of neighboring states.

The bank had failed to do one thing, however, which a good many of the citizens of the state felt that it should do: extend its banking services to those areas which did not enjoy them. It still operated exclusively in the Mississippi River section, which though by far the most wealthy, was an area in which the percentage of the state's free white population had been steadily declining. It had not extended banking services to the Pearl River area as it was obli-

gated to do in accordance with a plan which had been included in the law creating the official bank of the state in 1818; and, despite the strongest entreaties, it had not even established a branch in Vicksburg, a prosperous and populous new town in the Mississippi River section.

The bank's directors had their own reasons for not creating banking offices throughout the state generally. In their opinion: (1) the prospective banking towns were neither large enough or rich enough for the profitable conduct of banking operations, (2) there was not sufficient capital in each locality to supply the funds which would be needed for its new branches, and (3) capital could not be raised outside the state for the purpose of establishing new banking offices.¹ Although many citizens of the central and eastern sections and some of the Mississippi River section strongly disagreed with this opinion, the above excuses had proved up to 1829 to be sufficiently valid to protect the bank from drastic legislative moves.

The directors were little concerned over the fact that their reluctance to establish new branches was also limiting the bank's potential profits. Undoubtedly, the management's preference, as judged from its repeated actions, was to operate only the existing highly profitable offices in Natchez, Port Gibson, and Woodville.²

If the directorate had permitted an expansion into Vicksburg, Columbus, and Columbia, on a basis of capital funds raised partly through loans of the new offices, it is probable that profitable although not immediately sound units could have been developed in all three places. This policy had been used repeatedly by the bank in most of its previous fund-raising efforts, particularly in connection with the creation of the Port Gibson and Woodville branches. However, in 1821, the credit policies of the institution had been vastly changed. Thrown into the discard was the idea that the bank loan created capital; in its place was the opinion that practically all of the true capital in the state was in Natchez, Port Gibson, and Woodville, and that it would be depriving these points of needed funds if banking offices were opened elsewhere.³ With this new policy there disappeared any probability that the directors would approve the idea of self-financing branch offices.

The directors' lack of concern for the banking needs of Vicksburg, Columbus, and the Pearl River area was hardly unexpected, because this attitude was typical of Natchez citizens toward the problems of other sections. The bank's directors were among the most prominent personages of the city, and they thoroughly

¹Bank of Miss., "Memorial of the Board of Directors, August 5, 1831."

²*Idem.*

³*Idem.*

represented, as had been the case since the founding of the bank, the wealth, culture, and controlling political factions of the community. Some of the board members were among the richest men in the state. In 1829, the board of directors was in virtually the same hands in which it had always been: the descendants of the old wealthy families of the dominion period.

The fact that the official bank, in its first decade of operation, had not brought banking services to new locations in the state, was causing much dissatisfaction in the legislature. It was causing the representatives from the areas not enjoying banking services to think in terms of obtaining banking services of any kind and at any cost. Many legislators were ready to abandon their previous ideas concerning the sanctity of contracts and favor the state's revoking the monopoly; others were ready to favor federally chartered banking, although it represented a governmental principal which they disliked. To many legislators representing the towns which wanted banks, the fact that the state bank had revised its credit policies was not a sufficient explanation of its failure to establish new offices. It appeared to these lawmakers that the great strength and soundness which had come to the bank should make it easier to open offices in Vicksburg, Columbus, and Columbia than it had been originally in Natchez, Port Gibson, and Woodville.

It was the Vicksburg request for a branch which had finally succeeded in aligning practically the entire state against the bank. That city was receiving the sympathies of central Mississippi, because much of the latter area was drained by the Yazoo River, which entered the Mississippi at Vicksburg.

Vicksburg was also receiving the support of much of the Mississippi River country because it was as much a part of the river section as was Natchez itself. As those who wanted a branch at Vicksburg joined forces with those who wanted banks on the upper Tombigbee and on the Pearl, the political forces became almost irresistible. The opposition of the central and eastern sections to the bank was intense; for if the important town of Vicksburg could not command an office, the towns of the interior, which were much less commercially important, had even less chance for a bank than they had imagined.

In 1829, one last hope of forcing the old bank to conform to the will of the legislature lay in the possibility of finding a loophole in the law which granted the monopoly, or in finding some shortcoming of the bank in living up to the wording of the law. Legally-trained minds attempted to show that the bank was unconstitutional, and that it had not lived up to the terms of its agreements.⁴ Their complete failure to make a sound legal justification for any of their points attests to the quality of the legal talent of Lyman Harding and

⁴ Mississippi, *House Journal*, 1829, 127, 291.

others who had been responsible for the writing of the Bank Act of 1809 and the subsequent amendment.

As the political opposition to the bank came to be overwhelming, and as the legislature gradually gave up hope of breaking the monopoly by legal means, the old unattractive alternatives were still there to plague the legislature: (1) to win the bank over by persuasion; (2) to seek a branch of the Bank of the United States for Mississippi; or (3) to establish a rival state bank. The first was still the only plan which offered an acceptable combination of legality and the possibility of a successful attainment of the desired new branches, but it was steadily losing its popularity over the other two choices.

By 1829, the legislature was fast giving up the idea that the directorate of the bank could be influenced by resolutions. The lawmakers were becoming more and more determined to bring banking services to the state regardless of what the old bank decided to do. Nevertheless, as the legislators went about their business of trying to procure new banking services, they gave the old state bank ample opportunity at all times to reverse the tide which was developing against it. Unfortunately the bank's counter proposals, some of which came near to success, were always two steps behind the increasing impatience of the legislature.

A Discouraged Economy

As the bank issue was being fought out from 1829 through 1831, the economy of the state was in none too good a condition. The trend was toward a slow recovery from the extreme lows of 1826-27, but the economy had many of the earmarks of continued depression. Crop yields were fairly satisfactory. In the fall of 1828, crops were short, but in 1829 and in 1830 they were good.⁵ In 1831, they were moderately satisfactory. On the other hand, cotton prices fell to new low levels. At New Orleans throughout 1829 and 1830 they remained within the very low range of 10 to 11 cents a pound; in 1831, they receded further to a 9 to 10 cent range, in which they continued throughout most of the cotton marketing season.⁶ These low prices were particularly upsetting to the Mississippi River planters, who had always paid attention to "nothing but cotton" and had purchased "everything else, instead of raising it."⁷ It was also disturbing, although in lesser degree, to planters of other localities; for throughout the state cotton had displaced most other crops, including many items of home consumption.

⁵ *Watchers Statesman and Gazette*, August 22, 1829; *Mississippi, House Journal*, November, 1830, 9.

⁶ Arthur H. Cole, *Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861* (Cambridge, 1938), II, 228-240.

⁷ James L. Watkins, *King Cotton, A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790 to 1908* (New York, 1908), 169.

Thirty years of cotton prices, which for the most part had been satisfactory in comparison to costs of production and costs of living, had completely unbalanced the state's agriculture. From 1800 through 1825, with the exception of embargo and war and a short period in 1819-20, the planter's budget permitted profitable cash purchases of corn, flour, pork, and potatoes. Consequently, the people of Mississippi had come to regard cotton farming as a highly specialized industry with few complexities other than finding satisfactory lands and obtaining slaves in sufficient number.

An offsetting factor to the price drop in cotton could have been a corresponding reduction in the prices of cost-of-production items. However, this did not materialize, and the impact of lower cotton prices fell squarely upon the planters. Although in 1826 this adverse situation was regarded by most cotton producers as temporary, when the trend continued throughout 1827, 1828 and into 1829, they were seriously affected and they began to wonder what permanent underlying changes were taking place.⁸ What were the causes of continued low cotton prices? Why were the prices of other goods not being reduced in proportion to the drop in cotton prices? Would cotton prices be restored once again to their former satisfactory levels, or would low prices become the normal? If low prices did become the new order of the day, would low cost-of-production items eventually become available?

In seeking the answers to these questions, the planters soon realized that their economic destinies depended almost altogether upon two factors over which they had no control: the market for cotton, and the costs of items which they purchased from the northern and middle western states and from Europe. Mississippi's unswerving devotion to cotton production had at last made the state almost completely subservient to the industry which had formerly brought its residents much prosperity.

Seeking A Way Out

The earliest noteworthy attempts of Mississippians to free themselves from the enslavement of cotton took place in 1829. These movements originated in and around Natchez, where the plantation system and slave labor had come to their highest peak of development. They were associated with major conflicts in the minds and hearts of the people along both economic and sociological lines. The economic problem was whether or not to permit cotton, now far less profitable than it had been at any time since the war of 1812, to remain king of all industries, or to search out other crops and industries which would prove to be as lucrative as cotton had once been. The sociological issue was that of slavery: the people, par-

⁸Cole, *op. cit.*, I, 69-72, 170-179; II, 218-230.

ticularly in the Mississippi River section, where slaves already outnumbered whites, were beginning to see that the institution of slavery presented almost insurmountable problems. Cotton and slavery were directly related; in fact, they were almost wholly dependent upon one another. As long as cotton remained king, slave labor would no doubt be required in increasing amounts, and the entire state would some day find itself in the same position as the Natchez country, with more slaves than could be handled effectively. Mississippi was getting the worst of the slaves from Virginia and Maryland: these states continued dumping their unprofitable burdens at bargain prices, a situation which was causing increasing concern. In the legislature earnest discussions had taken place as to how the slave traffic might be prohibited or regulated, but little had been done.⁹

A movement in the direction of less emphasis on cotton and more on other crops and industries might accomplish two purposes: a return of economic prosperity, and a partial solution of the slave problem. This type of movement did start during 1829, and consideration of its merits attracted more interest and assumed more importance than the banking issue. Thus the bank's management was given an opportunity, unaccompanied by legislative pressure, of developing its own ideas concerning an expansion program. If the bank deemed an enlargement of its services either wise or necessary, it would have time to put its plan into operation.

The movement for economic reform in Mississippi was headed by Captain James Cook, editor of the *Natchez Ariel*. His first recommendation was the adoption of more efficient agricultural methods. Rotation of crops was advocated as opposed to the practice of moving on to other plots of land after exhausting old ones; the planting of cover crops, especially peas, was encouraged. Also prescribed was the home production of livestock and such subsidiary crops as corn, pork, and potatoes. This was good advice, agriculturally speaking. The planters had long known that their methods were leading toward exhaustion of the soil and ultimate financial ruin. In fact, in Natchez, there was an adage, repeated until it had become trite, that "in half a century," Adams County "would be the poorest section of the state."¹⁰ What was happening to the soil in Adams County was by no means confined to that section of the state, for under the cotton economy most planters were trying to get as much cotton from the soil as possible with the least expense; and the purchase of new lands was, in many cases, less expensive than taking care of old highly productive acres.

The editor of the *Ariel* also recommended a search for new crops to take the place of the long dominant cotton. He suggested that the Natchez climate would be particularly suitable for the pro-

⁹Mississippi, *House Journal*, 1826, 50-51; 1828, 328-29.

¹⁰*Natchez Ariel*, March 7, 1829.

duction of silk. Mulberry trees grew very well there and all that was needed for some planters to make a beginning was the importation of a few silk worms. Captain Cook also thought that grapes might be profitably grown in Mississippi, and that indigo, a crop dating from the Spanish days, might be revived. In addition, he advocated improved grasses for pastures.¹¹

The program of Captain Cook appealed to many planters. The Mississippi Agricultural Society was formed to encourage the adoption of new crops and better farming methods. The organization endorsed the policy of establishing the silk industry in Mississippi, and it especially favored the cultivation of only the highest grades of long staple cotton. The president of the society was Stephen Duncan, who was also president of the Bank of the State of Mississippi.¹²

Concurrently with the program for a more efficient agriculture and new crops, the *Ariel* spearheaded another Mississippi betterment project. It was a plan for balancing agriculture and industry in the state, and it differs little from the famous Mississippi program of a century later. Captain Cook pointed out that Natchez had not been really prosperous since the post-war boom of 1815-18, and that the salvation of the city and the state would eventually come from the establishment of new industries. Most of these would be related to agriculture. Suggested ones were the manufacture of cotton cloth, cotton blankets, cotton bagging, and cotton garments for slaves; but also recommended was the manufacture of nails. If necessary, although Captain Cook did not attempt to carry his point too strongly, slave labor could be used in the manufacturing plants.¹³

The stand of the *Ariel* was very much on the side of a protective tariff. The new crops and industries would be dependent upon it. The editor pointed to Louisiana sugar as a crop which had benefited greatly by the tariff. He further reasoned that acceptance of the principle of the tariff was inevitable even for Mississippi cotton planters, for if the sugar tariff were reduced, Louisiana sugar land would revert to the production of cotton and depress the price of the staple still further by bringing onto the market many unwanted bales.¹⁴ The *Ariel* was voicing the sentiment expressed in almost every current issue of *Niles' Register* and indeed that publication frequently quoted the

Captain Cook's program appealed to many Mississippians, especially the Anti-Jackson intellectuals of the Mississippi River section. Among the members of this latter group were those who in 1828 had deplored the popularity of Andrew Jackson. Several were

¹¹ *Ibid.*, March 7, 28, 1829.

¹² *Ibid.*, February 28, March 7, May 16, May 23, 1829.

¹³ *Ibid.*, May 9, 16, 30, 1829.

¹⁴ *Natchez Statesman and Gazette*, August 25, September 15, 22, 1830.

prominent officials and directors of the bank: Stephen Duncan, Adam L. Bingaman, Alvarez Fisk, and William Shipp.¹⁵ These tariffites were seeing at close range the prosperity of their friends and neighbors, the Louisiana sugar growers. In 1830, the influential factions in Natchez politics were actually in favor of a protective tariff.¹⁶

It was Andrew Marschalk, able editor of the Natchez *Statesman and Gazette*, who took the opposite point of view. One by one, he exploded the ideas of Captain James Cook. He showed that the tariff could never help cotton, an export product, and that Louisiana sugar was in exactly the opposite situation. As for the argument that Louisiana sugar lands would be converted to cotton, nothing could be more fantastic: a lower tariff would simply mean less expensive Louisiana sugar for Mississippi cotton growers. As for the tariff itself, it was a prime source of low cotton prices because it was interfering with the free flow of goods in world markets. Remove it or lower it, and satisfactory cotton prices would return.¹⁷

Marschalk's stand was a popular one. It placed the blame for the state's economic plight on federal policies rather than on any shortcomings of the local planters. It brought assurance that prosperity could be restored with little more than a reversal of current sentiment in Washington. Mississippians were experienced in national politics, and on many occasions they had carried their cases directly onto the floor of Congress. There the able leadership of their senators and representatives had been particularly productive of results. Mississippians were never so politically enthusiastic or effective as when their pocket books were concerned, and the tariff was an issue which directly concerned the prosperity of virtually every citizen of the state.

Marschalk, supporter of Andrew Jackson in the campaigns of 1824, 1828, and 1832, became the leader of one of the most powerful and united political and economic drives that Mississippi has ever known. His success in explaining the economics of the tariff to Mississippi's citizens also resulted in killing most of the reforms which had been suggested by the rival editor. If a satisfactory cost-sales price ratio for the planter could be restored through political action alone, there was little need for Mississippians to worry about new industries, crops, conservation of lands, and the slavery problem. In fairness to Marschalk, it was his stand on the tariff rather than his personal feelings which postponed the solution to the problems of land exhaustion and slavery. Actually, Marschalk was an ardent advocate of improved agricultural methods,

¹⁵Port Gibson Correspondent, February 9, 1828.

¹⁶Natchez *Statesman and Gazette*, September 1, 22, October 6, 1830.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, September 22, 1830.

and he regarded slavery as an evil which had become so firmly established in Mississippi that it could not be eliminated and must somehow be made to work.¹⁸ Nevertheless, to most Mississippians, Marschalk's program was simple: it favored cotton, slavery, and cheap lands; and it opposed the tariff.

This platform meant that the low farm purchasing power which had come in 1825, and which still remained, could be regarded as a temporary setback which political action could quickly remedy. Actually, what appeared to be a relative cost disadvantage for the cotton planter was a development of a permanent nature: competition within the cotton producing industry was finally calling for the elimination of high production costs.

Marschalk's program fitted in with almost every phase of Mississippi's economic problem. Cotton, the one crop which grew best, would continue to be the economic mainstay; cheap lands would soon be obtainable from the United States government as a result of negotiations with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians; and thus the ambitious poor farmer would have his opportunity to acquire slaves in large number. The most important and immediate thing which prevented the attainment of this program was the tariff. Naturally, Mississippians, except for a few notable exceptions in Natchez and in the Mississippi River country, were filled with ample political enthusiasm as they fought against the protective tariff in 1828, 1829, and 1830.

Although Mississippians were almost totally for Jackson in 1828, the loss of purchasing power of cotton, and the slave problem, threw them more firmly behind him than ever in 1829. The new president seems to have had the answer for most of the woes of the cotton farmer. As for abundant lands, he was actively and successfully seeking removal of the Indians from the northern half of Mississippi. When these lands would be offered for sale, Jackson's supporters had little doubt that the original prices and the terms of payment would strongly favor the local purchaser. In regard to cotton prices, Jackson's stand against high tariffs would soon result in lower costs on United States and European goods and a higher selling price for cotton. Added to these factors was Jackson's great personal popularity in Mississippi.

The dynamic wave of Andrew Jackson support and anti-tariff sentiment which swept the state from 1828 through 1831 is the same as that which engulfed the Bank of the State of Mississippi and led to the mortgaged-land banks. In 1824, only the central and eastern sections had been solidly behind Jackson; the Mississippi River counties leaned much more toward John Quincy Adams, who was elected. In 1828, the Mississippi River section joined the central and eastern sections in favoring Jackson's election. After 1828, as

¹⁸*Ibid.*, August 15, 22, 1829; August 11, September 22, 1830.

Mississippians, even including most Natchezians, took their final stand in opposition to the tariff, Jackson's support in Mississippi became almost unanimous. Natchez became the last stronghold of the tariff advocates in Mississippi, and also the last citadel of defense of the old state bank. By and large, the Natchez Whigs were identified in Mississippi with the losing sides of both issues.

This united stand of Mississippians had its economic implications. Naturally, if there were going to be low tariffs, high cotton prices, and abundant lands, now was the time for everyone to begin initial purchases of lands and slaves. Much of the desired land was still in the hands of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, but slaves were in good supply. In 1829-31, despite the low profits of cotton production, all who could obtain credits of any description were using them in highly speculative purchases of lands and slaves, especially the latter. The mania for "nigger property" became so great that there was talk of suspending local slave trading in an effort to ward off what seemed to be inevitable economic collapse.¹⁹

The craze could not be halted, because every purchaser imagined himself a future wealthy citizen, all the while thinking of some Natchez nabob he sought to emulate. Many of the old Natchez residents had made their millions; why shouldn't the same opportunities be available for the newcomers of the central and eastern sections, and indeed also for the newer arrivals into the Mississippi River country? Time and again proposals for a solution to the slave problem were made in the state legislature, and every time they were defeated by the representatives of those sections which had few Negroes but whose residents intended to acquire them. Even though the quality of the slaves coming into Mississippi from Virginia and Maryland was getting steadily worse, the legislature was still reluctant to stop their importation.²⁰

These heavy investments in slaves were very unwise. For the time being slavery in Mississippi had overstepped its economic usefulness, but only a few could realize it. The great advantage of slavery from 1795 through 1825 was that it offered a quick and an abundant labor supply during a period when there was a tremendous demand for cotton. The long-term costs of slave labor had probably been very high but in a situation such as that which prevailed for thirty years following the introduction of the cotton gin even this factor had not prevented great profits.²¹ At that, costs of labor had probably been no higher proportionately than the long term costs of exhausting excellent lands in an effort to get as many bales as possible with the least expenditure.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, August 15, 1829; *Natchez Ariel*, August 15, 1829; *Port Gibson Correspondent*, June 27, 1829.

²⁰*Wiles' Register*, December 1, 1827.

²¹Winfield H. Collins, *The Domestic Slave Trade of the Southern States* (New York, 1904), 26.

Many of the older settlers, especially those of the Natchez country, were becoming aware of the economic disadvantages of slavery in 1825, just as the thirty year period of excellent cotton profits was coming to a close. According to one "subscriber" to the *Natchez Gazette*, when cotton became less profitable, as it was bound to do and when the planter assumed his full responsibility to his slaves, as he was also bound to do, slaves would become a charge rather than an asset. This bleak economic future, coupled with his own definitely disturbed moral and religious convictions, caused the writer to conclude that slavery was "damnable," but that its use had proceeded too far to stop the evil. The one thing that should be done was to stop the importation of new slaves immediately.²²

This analysis proved to be amazingly correct. In the three depression years which followed 1825, slavery shifted from the asset side of the ledger to a point very close to the liability side. By 1829, many slave owners, especially those who were extending more humane treatment to their charges at considerable expense to their overburdened pocket books, were wondering what permanent solution could be found.²³ Prominent among the proposals was a colony in Liberia to which slaves could be returned. The general conclusion reached by nearly everyone was the same as that of the "subscriber" of 1825: that slavery was indeed a social and economic liability but that some way must be found to make it work.²⁴ One of the ways in which this might be done would be to restore its former profitability. This, it was hoped, would come with a lowering of the tariff.

The demand for lands and slaves produced a capital shortage in Mississippi which was far greater than that indicated by the adverse business situation. Even if the Bank of the State of Mississippi had had access to out-of-state moneys in large amounts, it is doubtful if it could have satisfied the demand for cash. Even had it chosen to issue money of doubtful security, it most likely could not have pleased all those who would have requested bank loans. According to a contemporary opinion, "our bank has extended her discounts to this time, \$350,000.00 more than at any former period. The only possible cause that has evaporated all this unusual flow of means, is the simple fact that our planters, fascinated with the former success of similar experiments, have, in many instances exceeded their means; the whole amount of which, and their credit, have been laid out in the hitherto valuable property of the negroes."²⁵

When the legislature met on January 5, 1829, the Andrew Jackson campaign had been completed. The issues had been hard fought in Mississippi and feelings had run very high. So exciting

²²*Natchez Gazette*, December 3, 1825.

²³*Natchez Ariel*, May 16, 1829.

²⁴*Natchez Statesman and Gazette*, September 29, 1830.

²⁵*Natchez Ariel*, May 16, 1829.

had been the campaign, that the session of the legislature was a political anti-climax. Governor Brandon in his annual message spoke of the harmony and good feeling which had returned to the people. As badly hated as was the tariff law of 1828, the local citizens had calmed down to the point where they were willing to carry on the fight against it by constitutional means. Governor Brandon attempted to dispel some of the heated tariff arguments which were still taking place among the members. He pointed out that great harm had come not so much from the tariff itself but from the unbalance which had resulted from giving too much protection to certain industries, and to industry generally as opposed to agriculture. He even indicated that perhaps both industry and agriculture might have need for some degree of protection.²⁶ Still needed were internal improvements such as canals, roads, harbors, and bridges. Still desired, also, but subject only to the will of the federal government, was the removal of the Indians from the largest and best land areas in the northern part of the state. Still needed was a system of public education. The Literary Fund, with most of its assets invested in bank stock, had accumulated almost to the point where a large scale educational program could be commenced.²⁷

In the legislature there was little agitation of such drastic ideas as a new state bank or of a Mississippi branch of the Bank of the United States. Governor Brandon was known to favor the existing state bank and to be opposed to a Mississippi office of the Bank of the United States. At times it even seemed as though the bank and the state, as in 1827, were once again about to come to an agreement, for in 1829 the legislature for the last time placed its full support exclusively behind the state bank.

Also, for the last time had ante-bellum Mississippians deigned to argue the pro and con of the cotton economy. Everything was now to be swept up in a great land boom created by the opening of North Mississippi to white settlement. Every prospective planter who set out into the hinterland of Mississippi could already see the moonlight and the magnolias and taste the mint juleps that had become the perquisites of plantation living. He wanted land, lots of land; Negroes, lots of Negroes; and credit, lots of credit. In a year the Bank of Mississippi would lose its monopoly and the era of easy credit would be ushered in. Cotton would be undisputed king, and tariffs would be anathema. Slavery also would be king. The black man was already enslaved, but the Yankees freed him three decades later. The white man was not as fortunate. He would be enslaved by cotton for another century.

²⁶Mississippi, *House Journal*, 1829, 11-14.

²⁷*Idem*.

TVA IN TISHOMINGO

By IDA HARLENE MOHN

PART I

Introduction

Floods of record size and destructiveness in the central portion of the United States during 1951 and 1952 brought increased discussion of the whole problem of rivers and their control and development. Those seeking solutions to the problem turned to work already completed in other areas to see what results had been obtained and what lessons had been learned that could be applied elsewhere. One of the developments studied was the Tennessee Valley Authority. Ever since its inception this depression-born governmental attempt to control the fourth largest river system in the United States for the benefit of all the people in that area has been the subject of much concern.

Tishomingo County is the area most directly affected by the TVA in Mississippi. Changes which have occurred there are typical of those in other parts of the Tennessee River watershed. Lessons which these people have learned and advances they have made toward a better way of life have been or may be duplicated anywhere in the Valley. A more intensive study of one area brings these experiences into sharper focus. Here we shall attempt to tell the story of TVA in Tishomingo County from 1934 to 1950.

Pickwick Dam

It was Pickwick Dam which dramatized the TVA to Mississippians, especially those in Tishomingo County. First mention of a TVA dam at Pickwick Landing, Tennessee, is contained in the TVA's first annual report.¹ This dam is situated just eight and one-half river miles north of the Mississippi state line.² The name of the community dates back to the Civil War. Originally White Sulphur Springs, its name was changed by the first local postmaster who was very fond of the works of Charles Dickens.³

¹ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1934*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, 1935, p. 14.

³ Tennessee Valley Authority, *The Pickwick Landing Project, Technical Report No. 3* (Washington, 1941), p. 3.

Since the valley is only one and one-half miles wide at this point and bedrock is just ten feet below the river bed, it was easily recognized as a good site for a dam.⁴ As early as 1922 the Army Engineers recommended the development of this site. The Mississippi Power Company once investigated a site several miles upstream. In August 1934 the Tennessee Valley Authority began to investigate the possibilities for a dam at Pickwick Landing and in November of that year authorized its construction. The site at Parker's Landing was also considered, but it would have required a low dam at Big Bend Shoals for proper navigation. One larger dam would be able to produce more power as well as facilitate navigation.⁵ This was the first dam designed by the Authority; Norris, and later, Wheeler, were designed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The dam was to be used for navigation and flood control. Power generation was not contemplated at first.⁶

Pickwick Dam is fifty-three river miles downstream from Wilson Dam. Eighty percent of the Tennessee River watershed lies above the dam.⁷ Its reservoir stretches nearly to Wilson Dam and normally covers about sixty-five square miles.⁸ The upper third of the reservoir lies in a lowland agricultural setting, but the lower two-thirds is in rugged table-land where the shores of the lake rise steeply to the tree-covered hills. A long arm of the lake extends south along Bear Creek for almost fifteen miles. Parts of Hardin County, Tennessee, Tishomingo County, Mississippi, and Colbert and Lauderdale Counties in Alabama lie under these waters. Along this stretch the river slopes a fraction over one foot per mile.⁹

Construction on the dam began in January 1935. Materials for it were transported from the rail point at Corinth, Mississippi. A camp for construction workers was erected on the south side of the river. It included a white village of fifteen permanent houses, fifty-five temporary houses and four bunkhouses, and a Negro village of twenty-five houses and a bunkhouse. Each group had a cafeteria, recreation building and school. In the white village there was also a store, fire station, hospital and employment office. Each community had a sewer system, electric heat and oiled gravel roads.¹⁰

⁴ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, p. 14.

⁵ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, pp. 4, 12-13.

⁶ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, pp. 14-15.

⁷ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p. 3.

⁸ Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Regional Planning Studies, *The Scenic Resources of the Tennessee Valley* (Knoxville, 1938), p. 185.

⁹ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, pp. 15-16.

As completed, the overall length of the dam is 7,715 feet and its maximum height is 113 feet. The embankment tapers from 360 feet wide at the base to 20 feet at the top. At the south end of the spillway section is a navigation lock with a maximum lift of 63 feet, one of the highest in existence. As late as 1941 the turbines had the largest diameter of any propeller type in the United States.¹¹

For flood control, the elevation of the lake can be lowered six feet before an expected rise. An additional four feet of storage can be provided if necessary, making a total storage capacity of 418,000 acre-feet of water. In this function it merely supplements the storage capacity of the Kentucky Reservoir just below it, as Pickwick is below the point of major flood hazard on the Tennessee. Navigation can now be assured of a nine-foot channel where before there was a series of pools with shifting sandbars and a depth of only four feet during low water. The reservoir would also serve as the terminal pool for the Tombigbee-Tennessee River Canal if it is ever constructed.¹²

Over 62,000 acres of land were purchased for the Pickwick Reservoir. Some of this provides an extra strip of TVA land around the edge of the lake, or was purchased to avoid the breaking of farm units. More than five hundred families had to be removed from an area that represented 4.2 percent of the total of the counties. Tax revenue from property assessed at nearly \$600,000 was lost to the local governments. Based on 1935 tax rates this loss was over eleven thousand dollars; however this was less than one percent of the total revenues of the four counties. The cities of Waterloo and Riverton in Alabama were most adversely affected, for much of their trade area was flooded. Residents of Waterloo started unsuccessful agitation for TVA to purchase the entire town since part of it and most of the surrounding land were to be flooded.¹³

For the land which it purchased, TVA paid an average of fifty-two dollars an acre, over five times its average assessed value. The land was appraised independently by two men and purchased at the appraised price. There was no bargaining. In the appraisal, consideration was given to a price which would allow the owners to relocate themselves in a situation at least equal to the one they were leaving. Under these conditions, 91.1 percent of the land was purchased by voluntary transfer, 1.1 percent was condemned because of complications in the title and 7.8 percent was condemned after disagreement over the appraised value. Landowners could remain on the property until possession was required by the Authority. Then they could move any improvements not needed by the Authority. Many of the families found it difficult to

¹¹ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project* (Washington, 1941), pp. 4-5.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 25.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 36-39, 257.

relocate satisfactorily, mainly because three-fourths of them were tenants and because most of them wished to remain in the immediate area.¹⁴ Fortunately, few of the displaced farmers invested their cash in "gold stock". Surveys have indicated that seventy percent of the families found themselves equally or better satisfied in their new homes.¹⁵

In preparing the land for flooding, TVA cleared 16,000 acres of land and 382 miles of river bank as well as relocating roads and railroads.¹⁶ Clearance work for Pickwick reservoir was done between August 1935 and December 1937. In August 1936 a peak of 1,611 men were engaged in these operations. All clearance work was directed from a field office at Iuka, Mississippi.¹⁷ To facilitate work, a telephone line from Pickwick Landing to Iuka was purchased by the Authority from the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company.¹⁸

Grave removals by the clearance workers were necessary only in Alabama and Mississippi.¹⁹ This work was made more difficult by the problems of finding the locations of old graves and the names of the deceased and their nearest living relatives.²⁰

An interesting sidelight to the clearance work was the archaeological investigation in cooperation with the University of Alabama. Nineteen sites were excavated. One group of earth mounds yielded more evidence of the existence of the new Copena complex, a people who had "some 31 cultural traits mostly associated with the occurrence of copper and galena in earth burial mounds." The shell mounds that were excavated showed that the people had traits similar to those in the Wheeler area. They lived in the prehistoric period, mostly even before pottery was used.²¹

After all construction and clearance work was completed, a grand opening and dedication of Pickwick Lake was held on June 2, 1940. The festivities were highlighted with speeches by Governor Cooper of Tennessee, Congressman John E. Rankin of Mississippi and others. Motorboat and sailing races were held on the new lake.²² Guides were present to explain the lock, powerhouse and other structures to visitors. There was even a ferry to carry the cars of the visitors across the river.²³

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 260, 267.

¹⁵Lillienthal, *TVA* p. 63.

¹⁶Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, p. 17.

¹⁷Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p. 264.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 254.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 279.

²²Iuka (Miss.) *Vidette*, May 30, 1940.

²³*Ibid.*, April 25, 1940.

What did Pickwick Dam mean to Tishomingo County? Its reservoir covers about 15,000 acres in a strip along the northeast edge of the county.²⁴ Nearly six miles of principal roads and over one-half mile of tertiary road had to be relocated as a result of the flooding.²⁵ In 1951 five hundred more acres of land were acquired near Iuka, Mississippi, to construct the Colbert steam plant to generate extra electricity.²⁶

Eighty percent of the area of Tishomingo County lies within the watershed of the Tennessee River. The part of the county which is outside this watershed is equal in area to the portion of the watershed which drains other Mississippi counties — twenty percent of Alcorn, four percent of Prentiss, and one percent of Itawamba. The upper coastal plain soils and rugged topography of the entire region are generally homogenous.²⁷ Therefore, since the 62,000 acres of the watershed lying outside Tishomingo County has no unique characteristics, all data here will refer to Tishomingo County as being representative.

Elevation in Tishomingo County ranges from four hundred to six hundred feet above sea level. The northern part of the county is more rugged and has less crop land than the southern. The climate is suitable for crop and livestock production with a growing season of 220 days²⁸ and an average annual rainfall of slightly more than fifty-two inches.²⁹ The population is ninety-five percent white. The few Negroes are concentrated in one or two communities.³⁰

Because of the rugged topography, sixty-six percent of the county is occupied by timber and farm woodlands which are major sources of income for the people.³¹ Of the 67,000 acres which are in crop land, 45,000 acres are rolling uplands that need terracing. The valleys are usually well drained, but springs along the base of the hills sometimes cause a belt of seepy land there. The upland erodes badly unless terraced or planted to sod crops.³²

Figures from the Production Marketing Association show 2,000 farm operators in Tishomingo County in 1934-35.³³ Accord-

²⁴County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1935, p. 5.

²⁵Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p.274.

²⁶Iuka (Miss.) *Vidette*, March 1, 1951.

²⁷Progress in Agricultural Development and Watershed Protection in Tennessee Valley Area of Mississippi as Represented by Tishomingo County, p. 1. Prepared by Lawrence A. Olson and others of the Mississippi Agricultural Extension Service Staff. Hereafter cited as Progress in Tishomingo County.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁹County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1950, p. 15.

³⁰Progress in Tishomingo County, p. 2.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

³²County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1950, p. 34.

³³Progress in Tishomingo County, p. 3.

ing to the 1935 census, these included 941 full owners, 137 part owners, 844 managing share tenants and 440 sharecroppers.³⁴ In 1942 the number began to increase until in 1950 there were 2,343 farm operators.³⁵ This increase has been attributed to the return of war veterans and war-time workers as well as higher prices for farm products which influenced young people to remain on the farm.³⁶

The extreme poverty of these people during the depression is almost unbelievable. One reason that the Tennessee Valley Authority brought such a great change may be that their original condition was so desperate. In 1935 the Authority conducted a survey of over seven hundred rural families who would be affected by the Pickwick Reservoir. All but one hundred of these were farmers. Eighty-five percent were white. Only thirty percent were owner-operators. Nearly one-half were tenants who paid an average of one-third of their corn and hay and one-fourth of their cotton for rent, while furnishing their own labor and machinery. One in seven of those in the survey were share-croppers who had no machinery and paid half the crop as rent.³⁷

With so few of the farmers owning their land, length of tenure was relatively unstable. Although they were nearly all native to the area, the tenants lived an average of only 3.9 years on a farm, with share-croppers who had no machinery registering an average tenure of much shorter duration. Though they seldom left a community, they moved around within it.³⁸

Income was correspondingly low. Farm laborers received fifty cents to one dollar a day for less than six months a year in addition to their house and garden. In 1934 median net cash incomes in the area ranged from \$182 for farm laborers and \$186 for share-croppers through \$201 for tenants to \$318 for owners-operators. This meant an average of \$223 net cash income for the farmers in that area. This was supplemented by the \$222 average value of product that was consumed and produced at home each year.³⁹

Share-croppers and tenants had, on the average, a plot of twenty-five to thirty-five acres, nearly all cropland. Owner-operators had nearly one hundred acres which included some pasture and timber. On this plot of land was a home, which was typically an unpainted, one-story structure of two or three rooms. Four families in the entire area had bathtubs, one an inside toilet. Ninety percent of the homes were heated by fireplaces. Only seven of the

³⁴Progress Report and Farm Business Summary of Thirty-two Unit Test Farms in Tishomingo County, Mississippi, 1938, p.2. Hereafter cited as Progress Report and Farm Business Summary, 1938.

³⁵County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1950, p. 3.

³⁶Progress in Tishomingo County, p. 4.

³⁷Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p. 37.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 38.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 37.

homes had telephones and eight had electricity. One family in six had a car, but its average age was six years.⁴⁰

Culturally, most of the families were on this same sub-standard level. Nearly ten percent of the heads of households had never attended school. The median grade completed was 5.4 for males and 6.6 for their wives. However, their children seemed to be receiving a better education, for ninety-six percent of those between seven and twelve were enrolled in school though most were below the normal grade for their age. Few families subscribed to newspapers or magazines.⁴¹

Economic conditions could have been better had there not been an imbalance between agriculture and industry. However, at that time neither the people nor the conditions in the region seemed too receptive to the introduction of industry. In Tishomingo County, for example, there were some possibilities for small industries that required little capital, but there was no local market for their products.⁴² Small firms can seldom afford to spend time and money creating markets for their output.

The Employment Picture

Extra cash income received in wages for reservoir clearance work brought the first direct aid which Tishomingo County farmers received from the Tennessee Valley Authority. Even though wages ranged from as low as forty-five cents an hour for unskilled labor to one dollar an hour for plumbers and other tradesmen,⁴³ the added income was important in this area. By July 1935 there were already 146 people on the TVA payroll in the Mississippi area.⁴⁴ The Authority made a policy of employing local farmers on a half-time basis for reservoir clearance and any other work they could do. By this method the benefits of the employment were extended to a larger group. When the work was completed, the men would still be on their farms and would not have so great an adjustment to make as that which usually follows the closing of construction work.⁴⁵

Clearing of the Pickwick Reservoir was started in September 1935 and completed in June 1938. About 428 Tishomingo County farmers worked on the project, only twenty-two percent of whom

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴²U. S. Civil Works Administration, *Agricultural-Industrial Survey of Tishomingo County, Mississippi, 1935*, p. 10.

⁴³Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, p. 49.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁵County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1935, p. 5.

were landowners. In 1934 the median total cash income of those applying for employment was \$170 and their average indebtedness was \$124. Four years later one hundred of these employees were surveyed to determine the benefits of their extra employment. These included fifty-eight owners, nine share-croppers, twenty-nine tenants and six not classified. The survey showed that six had advanced from share tenants to owners, one from share-cropper to owner, four from share-croppers to share tenants and six owners had purchased more land.⁴⁶ Other more detailed improvements were included in the survey:

1. 52 had improved their livestock amounting to \$5,059.
2. 65 had improved their machinery valued at \$2,145.
3. 79 had more home improvements amounting to \$5,449.
4. 47 reduced indebtednesses a total of \$9,078.
5. 19 increased indebtedness a total of \$4,770 by buying land.
6. 28 gave no information on debts.
7. 55 made repairs on their homes valued at \$6,923.
8. 46 repaired barns and other buildings — \$3,247.
9. 63 constructed terraces on 663 acres.
10. 50 planted 364 acres to winter legumes in 1937 as compared to 7 planting 33 acres in 1935.
11. 47 improved their old pastures.
12. 41 enlarged pastures or established new ones.
13. 89 reported that they are now in better position to sustain themselves and their families than in 1934.
14. Median total cash income was \$346.⁴⁷

One typical employee reported that during twenty-five months he had worked half-time and earned \$1,145. He paid \$500 on the mortgage on his house and \$250 was used for the purchase of a team of horses. With the rest he painted his house and bought livestock, a washing machine, furniture and clothes.⁴⁸ His half-time employment was so arranged that he worked alternate weeks and was able to keep up with his farming during his free time.

Relocation

Acquisition of their land for the reservoir forced about 160 families in Tishomingo County to find new homes. Another sixty-three had part of their land flooded. They either had to find new

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 1938, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁸Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p.264.

homes or attempt to make a living on the hill land they still had.⁴⁹ The Alabama Polytechnic Institute and the Agricultural Extension Service of Tennessee and Mississippi cooperated with the Authority in helping these families to relocate. They maintained listings of available farms, furnished land appraisals and transportation to visit possible locations and gave advice on agricultural problems.⁵⁰ By December 1936 approximately 121 of the 160 families had relocated. During the next year twelve more moved. A major responsibility of one assistant county agent was to help them solve their problems. He gave advice whenever he could, but final decisions in all cases rested with the people affected.⁵¹

Of the 133 families who had relocated by December 1937, one hundred twelve found new homes in Tishomingo County. Twenty-one families from the reservoir area in Alabama and Tennessee also settled in Tishomingo County. Twenty-seven families from Tishomingo County and thirty-eight from Alabama and Tennessee relocated in other parts of Mississippi. Most of these settled in the nearby counties of Alcorn, Lee, Monroe and Prentiss. By the end of 1938 about eighty-four families — thirty-nine owners and forty-five tenants — still had readjustment problems. Thirty-four of these could conceivably remain on the land that remained, but the rest would have to relocate.⁵²

There was surprisingly little opposition to relocation. Relatively few people lived in the Valley in Tishomingo County, for it is quite narrow and deep. Some of the soil was quite fertile, but much of it was subject to overflow. Rumors reached the people that they would have to move, but few worried much about it.⁵³ When the rumors were borne out by the appearance of the land appraisers, the prices which were offered for the land were so much higher than the local selling price that relatively few objected to selling. In fact, at least one man in Tishomingo County became relatively wealthy by selling to the Authority for good prices a large amount of land which he had acquired through foreclosure of loans.⁵⁴

Some people delayed moving as long as possible for sentimental reasons. A few cases of suicide in the region were attributed to the frustration caused by imminent relocation. Their families had lived on that spot for generations and they hesitated to leave. One

⁴⁹County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1936, p. 12.

⁵⁰Tennessee Valley Authority, *Pickwick Landing Project*, p. 267.

⁵¹County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1937, pp. 13-14.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 1938, p. 13.

⁵³Interview with Charles M. Chafee, Leader, Older Youth Organization, Mississippi Extension Service, State College, Mississippi, April 5, 1952.

⁵⁴Interview with Herman J. Putnam, Leader, Field Studies and Training, Mississippi Extension Service, State College, Mississippi, April 5, 1952.

extreme example of this was a nonagenarian and his wife who lived on a mountainside above the Clinch River. He could not believe that the Norris Dam could ever back water clear over his house, so he refused to move. Finally, as the water approached his doorstep, he conceded that the engineers might be correct and he should allow representatives of TVA to move him and his house. But before he would leave he insisted upon taking with him a tub of coals from the fireplace where the fire had never gone out in 150 years and his pet bullfrog that awakened him at the same time every morning from the spring behind the house. Then, since the roads were all flooded, the old man and his wife left in a boat.⁵⁵

Unit Test Demonstrations

Demonstration farms were not an innovation of the TVA. They had been used before by railroads, colleges and other institutions and organizations. However, many of them had proved unsuccessful because of improper or unrealistic planning. The purpose of such a farm is to develop the entire farming program in a balanced manner according to latest scientific knowledge, not just to illustrate one isolated activity. The Tennessee Valley Authority began sponsoring demonstration farms in an attempt not only to improve the condition of the people but also to control erosion on the Tennessee River watershed to prevent accumulation of silt in the navigation channel.⁵⁶ Recognizing that the state colleges already had the trained personnel for planning these improvements, it worked through them and gave ample funds for their needs.⁵⁷

First plans for the unit demonstration farm program were discussed at a meeting at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, February 12, 1935. A week later, at Corinth, Mississippi, plans were made for selecting the farms. The Tishomingo County Agent, W. H. Elliott and the Soil Conservation Committee selected the first group of farmers who were invited to participate. Nine of the ten selected signed the Demonstration Farm Agreement, and were given eight and one-half tons of superphosphate for their land. This first fertilizer was largely wasted, since no farming programs had been worked out. In May 1935, program details were settled at another meeting in Corinth, and the role of each of the cooperating agencies was defined. By the end of August complete maps, inventories and appraisals were made of all nine farms.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Interview with Lawrence A. Olson, Contact Officer, T.V.A., Mississippi Extension Service, State College, Mississippi, March 24, 1952.

⁵⁶ County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1935, p.26.

⁵⁷ Interview with L. A. Olson, March 24, 1952.

⁵⁸ County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1935, p.35.

After this start, eleven more farms were added. The immediate goals for these were to terrace them properly, plant winter legumes, improve and increase the size of pastures and to get each farmer to keep adequate records of his business. After the farmers had proven that they could do this, a five-year plan would be worked out for each farm.⁵⁹

These farms were scattered throughout the county in order to have different types of soil represented.⁶⁰ After the first group showed the need of more careful planning, detailed maps and inventories were made of each new farm before any work was started on it.⁶¹

Each unit farmer kept a detailed farm account record which was analyzed each year to see which enterprises were profitable. Each farm served as a meeting place for field tours and demonstrations and as a laboratory to help others to improve their farming.⁶² These farmers were very cooperative in risking their meager capital in adopting what were to them new and untried methods of farming. At first, rumors of all kinds spread as to the "real intention" of the groups sponsoring the demonstrations. One story proclaimed that any land fertilized with TVA phosphate thenceforth belonged to the government. But the visible results of fertilizing and other practices soon were more convincing than the whispered tales.⁶³

Areas outside the Tennessee River watershed soon became interested in the unit test demonstrations and by July 1, 1936, twenty-two counties in Mississippi had been approved for participation in the program. Four years later demonstrations were being conducted in twenty-nine counties throughout the state.⁶⁴ The program was administered by the county agent and his assistants. The counties within the watershed had a special assistant to supervise test demonstrations. In addition, the Assistants in Agricultural Training, TVA, helped wherever possible. One supervisor coordinated the entire program throughout the state and the Extension Service tendered full cooperation.⁶⁵

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 1950, p. 17.

⁶¹Narrative Reports of the Assistants in Agricultural Training, T.V.A., Tishomingo and Alcorn Counties, Mississippi, 1935. Report of Leroy Donald, p. 2. Hereafter cited as Narrative Reports of Assistants, TVA, Donald (Currie or Dent).

⁶²County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1951, p. 12.

⁶³Lillenthal, *TVA*, p. 84.

⁶⁴Unit and Area Test Demonstration Program in Mississippi, Narrative Report of Supervisors, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1937, p. 3, and 1940, p. 3. Hereafter cited as Unit and Area Program.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 1937, p. 3.

Twenty-five demonstration farms were initiated in Mississippi in 1935.⁶⁶ By 1936 there were four hundred fourteen test farms in the state in addition to fifty-five reservoir clearance specials.⁶⁷ The next year there were eighty-two farmers in Tishomingo County cooperating in the program of whom fifty-five were reservoir clearance employees.⁶⁸ By 1938 there were thirty-two unit demonstration farms in the county.⁶⁹ During that year three farms were dropped for various reasons and twelve more were added.

The records which each farmer kept were collected and summarized into detailed tabulated annual reports. In these reports each farm was identified by its number only. For example some of the information about farm number 5 in the 1939 report included a beginning inventory of \$3,222.85 and an ending inventory of \$3,376.12. During the year this farmer's total farm receipts were \$1,550.99 in addition to the \$344.70 worth of products that he used for family living and his total farm expenses were \$1,050.49. The return on his investment for that year was figured at 2.9 percent. Farm number 5 had 142 acres. Twenty-nine acres of this were crop land, twenty acres pasture and eighty-eight acres woodland. Ten acres of the crop land were planted to cotton in 1939, nine to corn, six to legume hay, three to silage and one to truck crops. The amount and types of fertilizers used were stated as well as the yields of these crops. The total income and expenses per acre were derived from the records. The total income per unit of livestock on the farm was also calculated. The statistics for selected groups of high, low and average income farms were compared.⁷⁰

As a semblance of prosperity began to appear in Tishomingo County, the number of unit demonstration farms was decreased. Their purpose of bringing better methods of farming to the area had been accomplished. By 1950 there were twenty-nine unit test farms,⁷¹ and by 1951 the number had further diminished to nineteen. The entire program was officially discontinued on June 31, 1951, but farmers and the Extension Service decided to continue twenty active farms through 1952.⁷²

During the years they were active the test demonstration farms provided valuable examples for the county. The test demon-

⁶⁶ Tennessee Valley Authority, *Annual Report, 1935*, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Unit and Area Program, 1937, p. 6.

⁶⁸ County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1938, p. 12.

⁶⁹ Progress Report and Farm Business Summary, 1938, p. 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-94, *passim*.

⁷¹ County Agent's Annual Report, Tishomingo County, 1950, p. 4. Farm Number 5 belonged to B. O. White, Route 2, Iuka, Mississippi.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1951, p. 15.

stration farmers themselves, selected for their inherent capabilities, became leaders in various community groups. A number of them founded the Tishomingo County Farm Improvement Association, a cooperative purchasing and marketing agency, to aid all Tishomingo County people.⁷³ Nearly all the men employed by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to assist in making 1942 farm plans were demonstration farmers.⁷⁴

(Part II will appear in the January Quarterly)

⁷³Progress in Tishomingo County, p. 3.

⁷⁴Progress Report, Area Test Demonstration, Midway—Tishomingo County, Mississippi, p. 118. Hereafter cited as Progress Report, Midway.

THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM IN "THE CANTERBURY TALES"

By JAMES E. SAVAGE

Despite all that has been written about the so-called "marriage group" in the *Canterbury Tales*,¹ there is perhaps one more observation that may profitably be made, about the function of the "Franklin's Tale" as a resolving element for the whole discussion.

Chaucer, in his various writings, seems to approach the problem of marriage from many points of view, ranging from the extremely practical in the *Melibeu* to the highly romantic in the *Parliament of Fowls*. In much of his writing he concerns himself with "courtly love," which by its very definition lies outside marriage and is incompatible with it.² It is my purpose in this note to suggest that the "Franklin's Tale" contains Chaucer's formula for the reconciliation of these conflicting points of view.

The problem can best be approached by some notice of his use of certain important words. When he is writing in the courtly vein he uses "lady" or "love" to designate the object of a man's affections, whether inside or outside the marriage bond. To Palamon and Arcite, Emily is "lady" or "love." Such is the falcon in the "Squire's Tale"; such is the Bouton to the dreamer in the *Romance of the Rose*; and such are Criseyde and the Formel Eagle to their lovers. Such also are Alisoun to Nicholas, and May to Damyan. But for such characters as the wife of Simon, the miller, Grisilde, Dame Prudence, and Pertelote, the romantic designation is normally abandoned in favor of the more commonplace "wyf." The terms are not interchangeable, and they convey, on the whole, different concepts concerning the relationships between man and women. In the courtly tradition, "wyf" and "love" had been two; Chaucer's prob-

¹ Among the notable articles dealing with the problem are the following: G. L. Kittredge, "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage," *MP* IX (April, 1912), 435-467; W. W. Lawrence, "The Marriage Group in the *Canterbury Tales*," *MP* XI (October, 1913), 247-248; Margaret Schlauch, "Chaucer's 'Merchant Tale' and Courtly Love," *ELH* IV (September, 1937), 201-212; G. R. Coffman, "Chaucer and Courtly Love Once More—the 'Wife of Bath's Tale'," *Speculum* XX (January, 1945), 43-50.

² See Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, ed. by J. J. Perry (New York, 1941); the articles in the previous note, by Schlauch and Coffman; and C. Hugh Holman, "Courtly Love in the 'Merchant's' and the 'Franklin's Tales'," *ELH* XVIII (December, 1951), 241-252.

lem is to bring them together into one person. So too, "husband" and "lover" are to be brought into one person. And finally, the results of these unions are to be brought together into a properly regulated marriage.

The Union of the concepts is suggested in the "Wife of Bath's Tale." The Knight in that tale, when he reports to the Queen on what women desire most says that "generally"

Wommen desiren have soverenyette
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie hym above.³

When he tried to dissuade the "olde wyf" who has given him this wisdom from making him marry her, she replies

I nolde for al the metal, ne for oore,
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.⁴

Once the marriage is accomplished, she assures him "I am youre owne love and eek youre wyf." These lines appear to suggest that Chaucer is working with two different ideas — that comprehended in the "husband" or "wife" part of the lines, and that in the "love" part.

It is common knowledge that Chaucer regarded himself as the poet of love; that he was familiar with the conventions of courtly love; and that those conventions condoned the presence of a third person in the marriage relationship — a Launcelot along with an Arthur and Guinevere.

At the beginning of her tale the Wife of Bath takes us into the days of King Arthur, into the material of courtly love itself; in fact, she institutes a court love to adjudge the problem of the knight who ravished the maiden. It seems not unlikely, therefore, that old wife, when she insists on being both "wyf" and "love" to the knight, is thinking of the two concepts, and is seeking to unite them in her own person. It is not enough that she be the wife of the knight; she must also be his love. When he recoils from her proposal, it is against only part of it: "'My love?' quod he, 'nay my dampnacioun.'" The alternatives which she offers the Knight seem to be along the same line: He may choose whether he will have her foul and old, and a "trewe humble wyf," or "yong and fair, and take youre adventure." When he addresses her as "My lady and my love, and wyf so dere," and in refusing to make the choice yields himself to her "wise governance," he is rewarded by having her in

³*The Complete Works of Chaucer*, ed. by Fred N. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), 103, 1039-40.

⁴*Ibid.*, 104, 1064-66.

both attitudes, as "good and trewe as evere was wyf," and "tomorn as fair to seene as any lady."

So — two of the concepts are united in the woman, but not so obviously in the man; and sovereignty in all matters remains with the woman. In the "Franklin's Tale," however, these matters appear to be corrected.

Arveragus has served Dorigen long and faithfully, after the manner of the followers of courtly love, and has been accepted as "hir housbonde and hir love." He is willing to "folwe hir wil in al, / As any love to his lady shal." Dorigen, however, declines the mastery — "Sire I wol be youre humble trewe wyf" — and Chaucer approves with such words as "Love wol not be constreyned by maistrye."

Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,
Servant in love and lord in marriage.
Thanne was he bothe in lordshipe and servage.
Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love acordeth to.⁵

In Averagus, then, are united the legal concept "husband" and the courtly concept "lover"; in Dorigen, the legal concept "wife" and the courtly "lady" or "love." Sovereignty, as the Wife of Bath would have it, has given place to "suffrance," though Arveragus will retain traces of both concepts, as "servant in love and lord in marriage." And Aurelius, as the lover outside marriage in the tradition of courtly love, resigns his claims, calls her the "treweste and beste wyf," and says, perhaps symbolically, "here I take my leve."

⁵*Ibid.*, 164, 791-98.

MISSISSIPPI PEOPLE AT MIDCENTURY

A REVIEW¹

By John K. Bettersworth

Mississippi's People, 1950 is the product of a cooperative research program instituted three years ago by the Division of Sociology and Rural Life of Mississippi State College and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Mississippi, and known as the Mississippi Program in Sociology and Anthropology. Under this cooperative research program, which has also included representatives of Mississippi Southern College, there has been considerable activity in the field of demographic studies, involving Professor Harald A. Pedersen, of Mississippi State College, Professor Morton King, of the University, and Professor John N. Burrus, of Mississippi Southern. In 1954 Professor Pedersen arranged with the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State to publish as the initial study in its Demographic Series *Life Tables for Mississippi, 1930, 1940, 1950, Abridged*, which had been prepared by Margaret E. Rice and Catherine Powell, of the State Board of Health. In the same year the Bureau of Public Administration of the University published *Mississippi Life Tables, 1950-51, by Sex, Race, and Residence*, the work of Professors King, Pedersen, and Burrus, which was the first fruit of the cooperative demographic research of the three-man research group. The life tables were essentially intended for research aids and as such were largely for scholarly consumption. *Mississippi's Population, 1950*, on the other hand, is directed at the layman.

Designed to be primarily of immediate and practical use to the Mississippians with which it deals, *Mississippi's People, 1950* is described by its authors as

... a brief summary and interpretation of the main facts now available about Mississippi people. It does not contain all the facts, nor does it answer all the questions suggested above. It is not written for specialists, but for interested Mississippians. We hope that many will find it useful in ex-

¹*Mississippi's People, 1950*. By Morton B. King, Jr., Harald A. Pedersen, and John N. Burrus. (University, Bureau of Public Administration, 1955: Sociological Study Series, No. 5, Pp. vi, 95. Tables, charts, and appendix.)

tending their knowledge of our state. It may be of particular interest and use to those community and state leaders who require special knowledge of the people with whom and for whom they work. Perhaps it can be used as a basis for group study and discussion, as well as for individual reading. High school classes may find here a unit of work; or adult organizations, the basis for one or more programs.

The current publication is actually a second edition of an earlier study published in 1950 by the Bureau of Public Administration of the University of Mississippi under the authorship of John C. Belcher and Morton B. King. The original monograph is now out of print, and the present amounts to a complete rewriting. Professor King is author of the "Introduction" and the chapters on "The Past" and "Fertility." Professor Pedersen prepared the chapter on "Migration." Professor Burrus was the major contributor to the chapter on "Mortality." The chapter on "The Future" was a joint effort, but the final manuscript of it, together with the editorial responsibility for the entire volume, devolved upon Professor King.

The chapter on "The Past" gives a hurried sketch of historical developments, knowledge of which is essential to the understanding of the present constitution of the state's population. Particularly significant for the hundred years from 1850 to 1950 has been the rise and fall of the relative proportion of Negro population to white in the state. In 1850, Nonwhite population, which was 51.2 of the state total, began to increase each subsequent decade of the 19th century (except for the Civil War period in the sixties) until it reached 58.7 in 1900. After that date a decline set in which in 1940 found the Negro population for the first time dropping under the 50% level. In 1950 the drop had carried the Negro level to a low of 45.4%.

There are excellent chapters on "Fertility" and "Mortality." Mississippi's reproductive rate is well above the national average, and its fertility ratio is the highest in the South, with only the mountain states of the west offering any sort of competition. As might be expected, the Negro birth-rate is well ahead of the white, although the two rates were almost equal for a time in the 1940's. As for mortality rates, the Negroes likewise exceed the whites. Indications are that mortality among Negro women in childbirth is relatively high. With Negro men, it is the urban group which sustains the highest mortality of the entire Mississippi population. On the other hand, white rural women seem to possess a hardiness unequalled by any other group in the state, their death-rate being the lowest in Mississippi.

What do Mississippians die of? In 1920, tuberculosis led the list. By 1930 heart diseases had taken the lead, a spot they have retained to the present time. Interestingly enough, cancer, which was tenth in 1920 is now third in rank.

Professor Pedersen's chapter on migration is up to his usual high standards. Mississippians have of late expressed increasing concern over population losses to other areas. This out-migration has increased in each decennial period since 1900. In 1910 the state suffered a net loss of 132,517 persons by interstate movement; by 1950 this figure had risen to 721,375 persons. Of the losses in the decade ending in 1950, 263,605 were whites and 457,770 were nonwhites, indicating that the migration of Negro population nearly doubled that of the whites. At the same time, Mississippi was not only losing her own native-born population; she was also attracting relatively few migrants from elsewhere. As might be expected, intrastate mobility seems to point to an ever-increasing concentration of state population in urban and suburban areas.

The chapter on the composition of Mississippi's population covers matters of age, sex, marital status, and race and nationality. Of great significance is the fact that Mississippi has a larger proportion than the rest of the country of children under fifteen — a condition that affects not only family economy but also state educational economy.

Only passing attention is given to the foreign-element in the population, a fact that is easily understood, since Mississippi's foreign-born population has always been quite small. Perhaps, however, brief attention might have been paid to the relationship between foreign arrivals and the campaigns some decades past in the Delta to replace migrated Negro labor with immigrants of Chinese and Italian origin.

The final chapter, with its glance at the future, expresses anxiety over Mississippi's problem of out-migration. The arresting of the trend of native-born Mississippians to the flesh-pots beyond the state's borders has become one of our major concerns. That it is essentially a problem of enrichment of the state's economy is obvious; but, as the authors indicate, Mississippi must act in many ways to make life more attractive to its people, particularly its youth. Herein lies a tremendous challenge to education. It is also incumbent upon the state to keep its college-trained men and women, who often feel that they are not wanted at home. Essentially, of course, it is a matter of the state's holding its youth by every means possible:

Certain features traditionally associated with small town and rural life make the "bright lights" of cities appealing to young people. Among these are a general atmosphere of complacency and conservatism, a scarcity of intellectual interests and cultural opportunities, and a lack of satisfactory recreational facilities. There are few communities which cannot, by taking thought and exerting themselves, create a way of life more appealing and satisfying to young people. Some Mississippi communities have proved that

churches, which are often least attuned to the needs and interests of youth, can in fact take the lead in improving community life.

Mississippi's Population, 1950 is a readable volume, something that cannot be said about every statistical survey of population that comes along in these times. There is much food for thought in the perceptive — often disturbing — observations the authors have made in their analysis of population trends in their state. Every Mississippian should read this study from cover to cover.

THE MARRIAGE OF MYTH AND REASON

A REVIEW¹

By Peyton W. Williams, Jr.

For the modern reader, perhaps no other characteristic of eighteenth-century English poetry illuminates so well the changes that a century and a half have wrought in attitudes toward the language, the content, and the functions proper to poetry as does its heavy reliance upon personification of abstractions. The beginning of these changes is generally dated, of course, from Wordsworth's celebrated attack in the Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, but the informed reader will know that the significance of this event must be qualified by an awareness of alterations in the patterns of civilized life, and in man's whole vision of the world, that preceded, accompanied, and followed the Romantic Revolution. These changes were so profound that during the nineteenth century, and for most readers during the better part of the twentieth thus far, eighteenth-century poets have failed to find audience on equal terms with poets of both earlier and later periods.

In recent decades, intensive scholarship and a more catholic criticism have effected something of a rehabilitation of the great Augustans and of some of their lesser fellows. This seems true despite the fact that a non-specialist observer can suspect certain modern scholars of succumbing to a temptation which besets all specialists, that of presenting their authors for appreciation upon the basis of a distorted pattern of values — specifically, in the case of some eighteenth-century scholars, of asking us to judge these writers more or less exclusively by the standards of their own times, as these standards have been elicited by the researches of the apologists.

This charge cannot be brought against Chester F. Chapin of the English Department of Mississippi State College, whose book *Personification in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* has just been published by the King's Crown Press, a subsidiary of the Columbia University Press. Professor Chapin's work is a compact piece of critical scholarship which seeks dispassionately to illuminate eighteenth-century uses of personification against the literary and

¹*Personification in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry*. By Chester F. Chapin. (New York, King's Crown Press, 1955), pp. 175. (Bibliography and index).

philosophical background of the period, while giving full attention to the soundest judgments of later criticism. This study, the fruit of some five years of scholarly effort, is a valuable contribution in its field for two reasons: first, that it goes far toward explaining the rationale of the eighteenth-century poets' predilection for the personified abstraction; and, secondly, that it establishes and clarifies an important distinction between two kinds or uses of personification in the poetry of the period.

The attribution of sense and will to inanimates is, of course, Ur-old; it was among the first stirrings in the long growth of man's religious sense. In classical antiquity, mythopoeia, until then allied with magic, shaded gradually into what was called *prosopopoeia*, "the animating metaphor," a device of rhetoric. Among Greek and Roman critics, as Professor Chapin points out, it was held in high esteem,² and although it was not a dominating device of style in ancient literature, the classical sanction was there.

It has often been pointed out that in the High Renaissance, although certain critics (such as Scaliger and Minturno in Italy, and Puttenham in England) were striving to reduce classical precept and example to a rigid pattern of rules, poets (and others active in other forms of artistic creation) were by and large too excitedly busy mining and spending the riches of antiquity to be effectively disciplined by rules, and too ingenuously self-confident to be awed to silence by the greatness of their ancient masters. As generations wore into centuries, however, and the classical inheritance, more fully explored and possessed, became an assumed background — the central substance of every cultivated man's education — the disciplines took deeper hold, and the achievements of antiquity (as the agreed standard and source of the rules) loomed ever more formidable. Thus, as Austin Warren³ and others have suggested, neo-classical writers knew so well, for instance, what an epic ought to be, as to be estopped from composing epics that would meet their own exacting requirements; hence they wrote "mock" epics.

Personification, then, both as fruit of the mythopoetic process (the whole wealth of classical mythology) and as the "animating metaphor," was part of the classical inheritance. It was accepted with a difference; however, for the Renaissance could not throw off the mediaeval fondness for allegory and for allegorical interpretation — of Homer and Virgil as well as of Dante and Spenser. This admixture may be said to have helped in projecting personification to a disproportionate eminence among poetic instruments by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Just at this epoch, too, literature and literary theory began to be influenced heavily by scientific rationalism.

²Chester F. Chapin, *op. cit.*, 6-7.

³Austin Warren, *A Rage for Order* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 39-40.

It is precisely at this point that Professor Chapin's study takes hold. The work is divided into two parts: Part I being devoted to what he calls the "allegorical or descriptive type of personification," and Part II to the type "most capable of exerting metaphorical force."

In the opening chapter of Part I, entitled "Addison and the Empirical Theory," the traditional attitudes toward personification, as set forth chiefly through the thought of John Dennis, are placed for comparison alongside "those newer attitudes toward the personified abstraction which derive largely from the application to literary criticism of the principles of English empirical philosophy, as formulated especially in the writings of John Locke."⁴ The chief critical spokesman for these "newer attitudes" is Joseph Addison.

Addison, in his papers on the pleasures of the imagination, may be said to have adapted the theory of artistic creation to the Lockean empirical epistemology. The effect was to set limits, hitherto unthought of, to the capabilities of the creative imagination. Literally interpreted, the theory meant that the artist is confined, for the materials of his creation, to the "natural," by which is meant the visible world of experience, and that in consequence he can create nothing "new" except by making "compound" images out of separate elements previously acquired by direct sensation, primarily by the sense of sight. Professor Chapin puts the point succinctly:

Hobbes, Locke, and Addison agree in denying the possibility of any transcendental source for the materials employed in the operations of imagination. Nor is there any quality in the imagination itself which is able to form images or ideas not derived from impressions of sense.⁵

The obvious result is to render the products of the imagination into "fictions," and the imagination itself into an agency inferior to the "understanding" or reason.

The imagination, so conceived, becomes at best no more than an aid to reason in seeking audience. But, as Professor Chapin notes,

Paradoxical as it may seem, it was the eighteenth-century bias in favor of the "natural" as opposed to the "unnatural" which was largely responsible for the prestige accorded the poet who was successful in the fabrication of beings "out of nature."⁶

⁴Chapin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 17.

Shorn of transcendental or mystical helps, the poet was seen as facing a task of much greater difficulty in creating his "fictions" than in recording his rational or moral truths; hence such creations, when accomplished, were the more to be admired.

Logically, then, the imagination must make pictures. "If, as Addison maintained," Professor Chapin goes on, "the essential distinction between poetry and prose lay in the fact that the former appealed to the imagination and the latter to the understanding, it followed that the poet should be lavish in the description of physical objects since the pleasures of the imagination are derived from objects of sight."⁷ Now, abstractions as such belong to the understanding, and hence to prose, but abstractions personified, being rendered into pictures, take their place among the proper stuff of poetry; indeed, in the extreme application of this view, they come to be regarded as among the chief marks by which "poetry" is distinguished.

In the actual literature of the century, Professor Chapin finds that this tendency revealed itself most conspicuously among the minor poets of the middle and later years who wrote under the influence of Milton's minor poems, especially of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." The tendency produced a spate of "odes" addressed to abstractions and composed in the conviction that abundant use of personification was sufficient proof of the authors' claims to the status of poet. Professor Chapin devotes a sensitive and scholarly chapter (which it is not feasible to summarize here) to showing how the best among the minor writers of this period, Gray and Collins (the latter especially), escape in part from the disabilities inherent in the tendency. (Burns and Blake are placed outside the scope of the study, as being properly Romantic poets).

Part I of the study concludes with a chapter devoted to attitudes toward personification in the final decades of the century and to the resultant state of affairs in poetry. Popular verse of the period included the insipid and affected verse of the "Della Cruscan" school, but the most popular poet was Erasmus Darwin, whose *Botanic Garden*, an attempt to convert Linnaeus's botanical studies to poetry by the systematic personification of the plants, constituted a veritable *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole tradition. It was Darwin in particular, Professor Chapin brings out, who stimulated Wordsworth's attack on "abstractionism" and artificiality in the diction of poetry.

By the side of these views and applications of personification, which stemmed from Addison's theory of imagination, Professor Chapin distinguishes a second variety of use to be found in the practice of the greater Augustans, particularly Pope and Johnson; this he identifies as "metaphorical" or "rhetorical" personification. Part II is devoted to this second type.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

Noting that, properly understood, "personification 'is a device of art, not the product of art,'" Professor Chapin observes that for Erasmus Darwin and others it had become "the product of art."⁸ The means had been mistaken for the ends; and since the means were relatively trivial considered as ends, poetry had been reduced in stature to an "amusement" for which one did or did not develop a "taste." Wordsworth's attack "struck at the heart" of this view; "for Wordsworth, true personification was a figure of rhetoric rather than a figure of fancy."⁹ The effect of Wordsworth's strictures was to revise perspective and to make possible a restoration of poetry to its rightful domain, rescued from the "poetical." But Professor Chapin implies that in consequence the baby was thrown out with the bath; despite Wordsworth's unqualified condemnation, he concludes, "the best eighteenth-century poets will be found to employ the figure [personification] effectively as a device of rhetoric."¹⁰

Professor Chapin does not contend that the theory and practice of Pope and Johnson stand entirely apart from their times. He admits that in their definitions, for instance, of imagination, they agree in many particulars with Addison. He takes full account of the extent to which the prominent place of the personified abstraction in eighteenth-century verse "is supported by a climate of opinion favorable to the contemplation of the abstraction as such, quite apart from the way in which it is used."¹¹ What he does find is that, regardless of theory, "the use of the prosopoeia in certain poems of Pope and Johnson is 'imaginative' in the modern sense of the term" with the poetic imagination conceived as involving "an effort of the total mind." In other words, "their use of the figure attains certain values — not necessarily *every* value — which modern readers expect from imagery in general, and from metaphor in particular."¹²

In a perceptive examination of Johnson's practice, Professor Chapin supports his contention that Johnson employs personification effectively in its proper role as a "device of art," in such a way as to lend it "the quality of concrete force." This use of personification as metaphor stands in contrast to the allegorical-descriptive use in which each personification tends to stand apart as a "picturesque" or "statuesque" image; the image instead is inseparable from the thought, to which it lends, among other values, economy of statement, finality of expression, and frequently a direct and powerful denotation of emotion.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁰*Idem.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

In the final chapter of the study proper, Professor Chapin examines Pope's use of the figure "as it appears in relation to the total structure and content of the poem," selecting for special analysis the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. He notes that the writer of neoclassical satire enjoys "peculiar advantages" over other writers in the employment of allegorical figures, since satire need not fear the sense of the ridiculous which often emerges from particularization of detail in representing such figures; on the contrary, it can make positive use of this effect. But the special burden of the chapter is the demonstration that the personified universals of Book IV, so far from appearing as static pictures, are used in an integrated and powerful way "to dramatize the transformations which occur when Dulness infects the arts and sciences which give civilization its value;"¹³ that these figures "take on a functional importance" in the plan of the poem; that they "contribute to the total effect of high seriousness in so far as they act to emphasize the larger issues which underlie the topical satire;"¹⁴ and, above all, that Pope feels and communicates emotion which is generated by "the denotative force of the abstraction itself."

This latter point, however, (the importance which the eighteenth century attached to the abstraction *per se*) must stand in abatement of any larger claims for Pope or for the poetry of the century in general. Professor Chapin makes no such claims. Comparing the eighteenth-century attitude toward abstractions with the mediaeval, which had seen the personified virtues and vices of allegory as living persons in a real drama, he notes that although naturally the eighteenth century was more interested in "particular virtues and vices as they affect men as members of a secular society," it nevertheless retained "a positive enthusiasm for the abstraction as such," an enthusiasm "based, however, less upon the perception of moral values in their relation to the individual soul, than upon a perception of their importance to the maintenance of a particular social order."¹⁵ The differences from modern attitudes will be obvious.

Allowing for the reservation implied here, however, and for the weaknesses in the allegorical-descriptive use of personification which he has diagnosed in Part I, Professor Chapin effectively justifies his conclusion that

when personification is placed in proper perspective, it is clear that it is . . . a device which gives truly imaginative expression to elements of thought and feeling which reflect that firm sense of actuality which is to be accounted "one of the central virtues of the civilized mind." Far from being, as

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Wordsworth thought, a device which removes the reader from the world of "flesh and blood," personification, as used by the major Augustan poets, impels "a strong sense of the real world." No other type of metaphor which eighteenth-century poets employ is more effective in conveying a sense of the real worth and dignity of those moral values which determine the patterns of civilized behavior.¹⁶

Professor Chapin has undertaken in this study a problem of a sort which is among the most exacting in literary scholarship. His handling of it reflects a thorough mastery of his sources and a sensitively incisive critical faculty. His presentation, if occasionally almost too subtly modest to be easily followed, is commendably compact and finally convincing; the reader knows that his conclusions, when they are offered, have been, as he says of one of Johnson's successful effects, "worked for." The book makes a definite contribution toward a sounder understanding and appreciation of eighteenth-century poetry; it will be helpful both to other scholars and critics and to amateurs of English poetry.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 133.

News and Notes

AMERICAN STUDIES MEETING. An organizational meeting of the American Studies Association of the Lower Mississippi will be held at the Christian Center of Millsaps College in Jackson on October 15. The program is scheduled to begin at 11:30 with an address on the Southern Literary Festival by Dr. Randall Stewart, head of the English department at Vanderbilt University. The afternoon program will consist of a panel discussion of the Southern cultural tradition. Participants will be Dr. Richard Amacher, professor of English at Henderson State Teachers College, Arkansas; Dr. John K. Bettersworth, professor of history and government, Mississippi State College; Dr. Rudolf Heberle, professor of sociology, LSU; Dr. Walter F. Taylor, professor of English, Blue Mountain College; and Dr. William Kolb, professor of sociology, Newcomb College, Tulane University. The meeting will close with a business session for the election of officers and the adoption of a constitution. Representatives from the colleges of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi will attend. The purpose of the association is to facilitate the exchange of ideas concerning the trends and quality of today's culture and civilization. The meeting in Jackson is expected to result in the formation of a new regional unit of the American Studies Association. Professors William L. Kolb of the Sociology department of Newcomb, and Dan Young, of the English department of Mississippi Southern, are co-chairmen of the organizational committee. Professor Scott C. Osborn, of the English department of Mississippi State, is secretary-treasurer.

PALMER TO STATE COLLEGE LIBRARY. Forrest C. Palmer has become director of libraries at Mississippi State College, succeeding Donald E. Thompson, who resigned to become librarian of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana. Mr. Palmer, who holds a masters degree in library science from Peabody, comes from North Carolina State College, where he was serials librarian from 1950-55.

STAFF CHANGES. The January issue of the *Quarterly* will attempt to include a list of staff changes in the Mississippi area. All information should be in the hands of the editor not later than November 15.

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert C. Weems, Jr.

is Dean of the School of Business and Industry at Mississippi State College. His doctoral dissertation, dealing with the history of the famed Bank of Mississippi, covers with considerable detail the economic development of the state as a whole from 1798 to 1840. Dr. Weems completed his doctorate at Columbia University in 1952.

Ida Harlene Mohn

is now teaching in the public school system at Corvallis, Oregon, where her husband, Paul, is extension agricultural economist at Oregon State College. Mrs. Mohn holds her masters degree in history from Mississippi State. Her thesis was a study of TVA in Northeast Mississippi.

James E. Savage

is Professor of History and head of the English Department at the University of Mississippi. He holds his PhD degree from the University of Chicago.

Peyton W. Williams, Jr.

is an Assistant Professor of English at Mississippi State holding AB and AM degrees from the University of Alabama. He is currently at work on his dissertation in connection with his doctorate at Vanderbilt University.

